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15 December 1956

M-2a
MINICARD

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant to Assistant Director/Central Reference

SUBJECT: Utilization by CIA of Air Force Minicard Product

1. Problem:

a. To determine whether or not CIA can utilize Air Force coding of Air Force documents for Minicard, after suitable conversion of codes, as Intellofax input.

b. To establish a procedure for utilizing the Air Force product if it appears reliable for CIA use.

2. Facts:

a. Air Force is coding substantially the same Air Force documents for Minicard as CIA is for Intellofax.

b. Air Force coders have been trained by CIA in the Intellofax concept of coding. Minicard coding as applied by the Air Force is primarily an extension of the Intellofax concept.

c. Air Force is currently performing an abbreviated coding of some categories of documents, notably Travel Folder documents which are merely being identified as such by the code 621.122. It is also applying area codes differently in some instances because of the use of GEORNEY in conjunction with the area code.

d. Air Force coding intensity is, in general, lighter, and there is some difference in emphasis of subjects selected for coding because of different requirements.

e. Air Force is not expanding any titles or writing any abstracts.

f. Air Force is using a one-card system, whereas CIA is planning to use a two-card system. Air Force documents are reproduced and distributed in hard copies to CIA about a week to 10 days before the Minicard code and image tape is punched for the Minicard camera.

g. Air Force punches tape directly as camera input; whereas CIA is planning to use an input of punched cards to tape to camera with separate code tapes and image tapes.

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Appendix A

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3. Discussion:

a. A conference was held with Air Force representatives to explain to them that CIA desires Air Force Minicard tapes to utilize them for obtaining an Intellifax input; provided that there is sufficient correspondence between Air Force practice for coding of Air Force documents with CIA practice for those documents. This will enable CIA to release sufficient manpower to the Minicard pilot project.

b. Air Force agreed that it was a desirable and feasible objective. They were assured that there is available a tape to card converter to enable us to convert Minicard tapes to punched cards for our contemplated method of input. They were also informed that we have tested a programmed machine conversion of minicoding to Intellifax codes.

c. Air Force has performed abbreviated coding only as an interim measure and plans to conform to acceptable standards of coding intensity shortly after the first of 1959. It requested CIA to draft criteria for making Air Force and CIA coding compatible in practice.

d. We requested Air Force to permit us to review their coding and compare it with CIA coding of the same documents for one month by providing us with copies of their code sheets for that period. This was agreed.

e. We find that about 90% of the Air Force documents require title expansion or an abstract. It is desirable to maintain the current practice of providing these additional features for the research analyst. Before accepting the Air Force coding of its documents some method of making title expansions must be devised or some substitute therefor found.

f. The most difficult aspects of the arrangement concerned procedures for providing CIA with the tapes so that they can be matched with the documents to which they pertain and, for the review period, providing copies of code sheets with the documents to which they pertain.

- (1) The tapes are punched in strips corresponding to the documents in one batch. Air Force says it does not have the manpower to perform the matching but it will provide a listing of document numbers in the tape. It seems that CIA will have to do it, probably prior to the key punch stage. A procedure for matching will be specified later. In the meantime, other copies of documents will have been disseminated when received. Single copy documents and processing copies required for further routing will have to be reproduced for extra copies for dissemination or the standard number of Air Force documents will have to be increased.

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- (2) Air Force will provide CIA with copies of code sheets by treating them as enclosures to documents. This will be done for one month after Air Force goes into full coding.

g. Air Force assured us that we will get one hundred percent coverage of documents we receive by tapes. Since our nodex standards are more comprehensive than those of Air Force, we will get more documents coded than would have been coded by us. We still want to get the documents indexed by Air Force also to maintain the completeness of our document file.

4. Conclusions:

a. Assuming that Air Force coding meets the criteria to be established for serving CIA Intellofax needs, CIA will be able to transfer manpower from coding Air Force documents to the Minicard pilot operation. It will not be possible to judge whether or not Air Force coding meets the criteria until we obtain code sheets with documents.

b. A decision will have to be made whether or not waiting a week to 10 days after receipt of Air Force document before being able to make an Intellofax input is acceptable. On balance, it seems to be worth the delay which is not critical.

c. CIA will have to provide the manpower to match tapes with documents. This may take a couple of hours a day but at far less manpower cost than original coding. CIA has also offered to staple sets of two code sheets with carbon paper between to enable Air Force coders to produce copies of code sheets for CIA.

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